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THE

Norwich Tragedy;

OR,

Unnatural Ingratitude.

BEING

An Account of Sir Peter Symonds, Kt. near Norwich, who marrying a Lady that had a Blackamore Maid, and giving her a Box of the Ear, ſhe, thro' Revenge told Lies of her Miſtreſs's being great with the Groom, and cauſed Sir Peter through Jealouſy to kill them both.

Of the Lady's Ghoſt appearing to Sir Peter, telling him of the Maid's Treachery, and bid him prepare for Death the next Day. And of his killing the Maid and Himſelf.

To which is added, a

Funeral Sermon preached on the Sunday after upon this melancholy Occaſion.

TEWKESBURY:
Printed and Sold by S. HARWARD, *Wholeſale and Retale.*

THE NORWICH TRAGEDY,

NEAR the City of NORWICH lived Sir PETER SYMONDS, a wealthy knight, who wedded a beautiful lady, a merchant's daughter from London, with whom he had a fortune of eight thouſand pounds, he being himſelf poſſeſſed of a conſiderable eſtate before; they lived together in all human felicity, both loving and beloved, for the ſpace of two years, in which time they were bleſt with two pretty babes, a boy and a girl, in whom he took a ſingular delight; but as no earthly happineſs is of long duration, all things in nature being ſubject to changes and alterations, and the devil, our adverſary from the beginning, always bearing envy to our well-ſettled condition, raked up a firebrand of hell, who ſuddenly blaſted all their joys in the following manner, *viz.*

The young lady's father having traded much to the Indies, &c. among other rarities which he uſually brought home to his daughter, during her childhood, once from Guinea he brought her home a very

very handſome blackamore girl, of very excellent features, of whom the young lady was mighty fond, made her as her companion and be at the ſame ſchool with herſelf, taught her the art of paſtry, dancing, muſic, and the like, and could never bear her out of her ſight, partaking with her of all her diverſions, both at home and abroad, and after ſhe married, made her her chambermaid; but keeping her at a greater diſtance than formerly, the blackamore grew inſolent and ſaucy, whereupon one day the lady gave her a box on the ear, on which ſhe vowed revenge if it coſt her her life; many ways ſhe plotted in her helliſh breaſt to bring it to paſs, and at laſt came to a moſt deviliſh reſolution, which ſhe practiſed in the following manner: One morning going into the garden to gather ſome flowers, and finding Sir Peter alone, ſhe thus addreſſed him: Worthy and moſt honour'd ſir, I have a ſecret to unfold, which ought to be buried in everlaſting oblivion, but the many favours you have heaped upon me undeſerved, would make it the higheſt ingratitude to conceal a thing which ſo much concerns your honour. Sir Peter being impatient, commanded her to be brief, whereupon ſhe thus proceeded: Sir, your beautiful lady, who you think is as chaſte as a harmleſs dove, is a meer proſtitute, and not to a gentleman of birth and breeding, but the very meaneſt of your raſcally ſervants, even your groom defiles your bed. Make this appear, ſaid Sir Peter, or I'll ſacrifice your life

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to my lady's good name. To which ſhe replied, ſir, you ſhall believe your own eyes; pretend to go a hunting, and return in an hour or two, and you will find them together in your chamber. She then withdrew, leaving him almoſt diſtracted to think of his lady's inconſtancy, bitterly exclaiming againſt all women-kind for her ſake; but all that day diſguiſed his grief and trouble of mind 'till the next morning, and then, according to the maid's direction, he provided to go a hunting, attended by many neighbouring gentlemen; and in an hour's time he privately returned back. The blackamore maid from a window waited his return, and no ſooner ſaw him approach, but ſhe called to the groom, and bid him go to his lady's chamber, for ſhe had urgent buſineſs for him; he being an innocent country fellow, thought it true, and ran up to the lady's bedſide to know her pleaſure, which put her in ſuch a paſſion, that ſhe threw the bed-ſtaves at him for his rudeneſs; while he was on his knees craving pardon, telling who ſent him. Sir Peter coming into the hall, now, ſays the maid, let your eyes witneſs my relation. Whereupon he goes up ſtairs with fire darting from his eyes, and a ſword in his hand, meeting the poor man coming from his innocent lady, ſheathed the dreadful weapon in his heart; and with the ſame reaking in his blood, pierced his lady thro' before ſhe had power to ſpeak one word for herſelf, and cauſed them both to be buried in

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one grave. And having ſo done he binds himſelf over to the next ſeſſions, which came on ſpeedily, when the maid-ſervant ſwore her maſter found the lady and groom in actual adultery, on which he was acquitted: and to the ſervant for her diſcovery, he gave his keys, and all the management of his houſhold affairs. Yet alas! this tranquility did not laſt long, for wherever Sir Peter went, he thought he heard the dying lady, and innocent man, ſounding in his ears, and reproaching him for his cruelty; and as he lay tumbling and rowling in his bed, endeavouring to ſleep, a light came into his chamber as it were noon day, and immediately the curtains opened, and the ghoſt of the poor lady appeared all in white, with the blood ſtreaming from her ſide, ſpeaking in this manner: Oh! unhappy Sir Peter, who ſo raſhly gave credit to the lies of my negro maid againſt your innocent man, who ſerved you truly and faithfully, and me your loving and virtuous wife, who never wronged you in thought or deed; wherefore I am come to ſummon you to the ſhades below, for by this time to-morrow you ſhall be with me in the ſtate of the dead; ſo ſet your houſe in order as ſoon as you riſe, prepare for your departure, for you muſt die and not live; and immediately ſhe vaniſhed with a dreadful groan, leaving him in the utmoſt confuſion to think what he had done, where he muſt go, and what he muſt ſuffer, in the morning when he aroſe, he called his

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negro maid before him, and thus ſaid: "Thou infernal fiend, and limb of the devil, tell me what moved thee to commit ſuch falſe accuſations againſt my dear and virtuous lady and harmleſs man." At which ſhe fell on her knees, trembling and weeping, and ſaid, it was becauſe of the ſlap which her lady gave her on the ear, that ſhe raiſed the ſlander, but did not think it would have produced ſo tragian iſſue. Whereupon he fired a loaded piſtol at her head, ſaying the devil might take her black ſoul and body both together.

Then taking his little children in his arms, with floods of tears, he took his laſt farewel of them, ſaying he was unworthy to live; that he would follow their mother to the grave; and then committing them to the care of Divine Providence, beſeeching heaven to give them more grace than their father had, and that they might uſe it to better purpoſe than he had, and making uſe of many other words, that would make a ſtony heart to bleed, kiſſing them a thouſand times over and over, he at laſt withdrew from them into another chamber, and taking the other piſtol he diſcharged it againſt his own heart, and immediately fell dead on the floor. The ſervants then ſent to his father-in-law, a merchant in London, who accordingly came to ſettle the affairs and take care of the children.

SERMON

SERMON,

Preached by the Rev. Mr. HIGGS, Rector of Hull, in Yorkſhire.

JAMES iii. 6.

The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity among our members, it defileth the whole body, and ſetteth on fire the whole courſe of nature, as if it were ſet fire of hell.

IN the introduction he ſhewed the abſurdity of preferring the people, and the commodities of other nations beyond our own, eſpecially the ſimple curioſity of preferring barbarians, blacks and negroes, proving them the offſpring of *Ham*, and under the curſe of *Noah*, for diſcovering his nakedneſs, *Gen.* x, 22. From whence he proceeded to ſhew the danger of being too credulous, and apt to believe falſe reports, giving many inſtances wherein it proved fatal to kingdoms and ſtates, as well as private families. In the next place exaggerated on the dreadful condition of liars hereafter, back-biters, malicious ſlanderers, envious perſons, tale-bearers, falſe-witneſſes, perjurers, and the like, ſhewing from *Rev*, vii, 21. *Exod.* xx, 16. and many other places, how their portion ſhall be in the burning lake of fire and brimſtone for ever. He alſo ſhewed how wary and cautious we ſhould be of all thoſe, who through malice, ſpight or revenge, ſhall ſow heats and diviſions among their neighbours; but more particularly, thoſe who breed debates between man

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and wife; denouncing many woes, from the word of God, upon all thoſe that warm themſelves with ſparks of their own kindling, uſing the words of St Paul, *Rom.* iii, 13, 14, 15, 16. *Their throat is an open ſepulchre, with their tongues they have uſed deceit. The poiſon of aſps is under their lips; whoſe mouth is full of curſing and bitterneſs, their feet are ſwift to ſhed blood, deſtruction and miſery are in their ways.*

In the next place he took notice of the miſerable effects of jealouſy, which covers a man with rags, ſays wiſe king *Solomon*, and tranſports all thoſe that are afflicted with it beyond all diſtricts of reaſon or conſideration; and therefore that all people ſhould have a great care how they adminiſtered the leaſt occaſion for it, either in word or action; ſhewing alſo the fearful conſequence of giving way to that, or any other paſſion, which hurries men on many times both to the deſtruction of ſoul and body; and then he began to expatiate on the great ingratitude of the vile wretch the devil's inſtrument that procured it, ſetting forth the crying ſin of murder in all its bloody colours, eſpecially that of ſhortening our own days before the Lord's appointed time. In fine, he commended peace, love and charity among all men; humility, meekneſs, patience, content in all ſtations and conditions, a perfect reſignation under the diſpenſations of providence; and this, ſays he, will bear you thro' all difficulties, 'till we arrive at the haven of everlaſting joy and reſt in the kingdom of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. To which place bring us all, O merciful God and Saviour, for thy name's ſake. *Amen.*

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